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COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION
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COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE
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COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS

November 17, 2008

Ms. Anne Quinlan, Esq.
Acting Secretary
Surface Transportation Board
395 B Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20423

RE: *Canadian National Railway Co., et al. - Control - EJ&E West Company, STB Finance Docket
No. 35087*

Dear Acting Secretary Quinlan:

I write today to encourage you to expeditiously consider and support Canadian National (CN) Railway's proposed acquisition of the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern (EJ&E) Railway Company. After considering all the facts, it is clear this transaction will reduce overall rail congestion and improve safety in the Chicago region and significantly enhance rail movement across the nation.

As you know, Chicagoland has been the dominant rail hub in North America for over a century and demand for freight rail service in the region is expected to double over the next twenty years. Unfortunately, the region's rail infrastructure remains at 19th century capacity, resulting in frequently blocked grade crossings, idling locomotives, increased road traffic, and excessive freight delays and congestion. For generations, my constituents and many other residents in countless communities all throughout Chicagoland have had to live with these issues.

In order to ease congestion and meet the nation's transportation needs of the present and future, I have worked to advance the CREATE program, a \$1.5 billion public-private partnership aimed to modernize Chicagoland's outdated infrastructure and better distribute and facilitate the movement of freight through the region. CN is a critical partner in this effort and their acquisition of the EJ&E will help achieve some of CREATE's benefits quickly without the need for public funding.

As some freight moves off of highly congested rail lines in Chicago and the inner suburbs, some communities along the EJ&E line will experience an increase in train traffic. At the same time, it is critical to take a regional, balanced approach to this matter and consider that over 60 densely populated communities, including many in my congressional district, will greatly benefit from this transaction. And in terms of overall safety, accidents at grade crossings in the region are projected to decrease by eight percent.

When all perspectives are equally considered, it is clear CN's proposed acquisition of the EJ&E is good for the overall region and good for America, and I urge the STB to move forward quickly on this matter. I appreciate your consideration of my views. Please enter these comments into the record of this docket.

Sincerely,

Daniel Lipinski
M.C.

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Member of Congress

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